

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

2006PHADV004

TO: Border Medical Officers, Emergency Dept.'s, EMS, Hospital Assoc.,
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Agencies

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: Pertussis in Maine

DATE: March 7, 2006

TIME: 5:00 PM

PAGES: 2

PRIORITY: Review

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Pertussis in Maine

Maine has seen significant increases in the incidence of pertussis (whooping cough) in recent years. Ten cases were recently reported from Hancock County. This advisory provides recommendations for the evaluation and management of pertussis.

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1. Consider pertussis when evaluating any patient with an acute illness characterized by cough >2 weeks in duration, or cough with paroxysms, whoop, or post-tussive vomiting. Infants may present with apnea and/or cyanosis.
2. Report known or suspected cases promptly to the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.
3. Persons who exhibit symptoms consistent with pertussis should be tested for pertussis with a nasopharyngeal swab. The state Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) tests specimens by culture and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in addition to other reference labs in the state. Serologic testing through private laboratories has not been well standardized and should not be used.
4. Individuals with suspected pertussis should be treated after a nasopharyngeal specimen is collected for testing. Antibiotic treatment for pertussis cases and contacts has recently been updated by the federal CDC in the MMWR (December 9, 2005. RR-14). The guidelines are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5414a1.htm>
5. Individuals with symptoms of pertussis should be considered to be infectious and should not attend school, work, or daycare until they have completed 5 days of an appropriate antibiotic. This is especially important for persons working in medical settings or with infants and young children.
6. Children under age 7 should be up-to-date for pertussis immunization. The two new pertussis-containing vaccines for adolescents and adults are not yet available through the state immunization program.
7. For more information on pertussis control measures, please go to www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/pertussis/guide.htm, or call the Maine Immunization Program at (207) 287-3746 or (800) 867-4775.